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**TO: Economic Support Supervisors
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**FROM: Amy Mendel-Clemens
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BWP/BIMA OPERATIONS MEMO

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Non W-2 [X] W-2 [X] CC [X]

PRIORITY: High

**SUBJECT: CARES ACTIONS REQUIRED BY WORKERS PRIOR TO SSI AUTO-
UPDATE**

CROSS REFERENCE: FSH Appendix 12.02.33.03 - SSI-E Payments

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 15, 2002

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Operations Memo is to describe the process required by local agencies in order to prepare CARES case records for Phase II of the Automated DX Update of SSI income.

BACKGROUND

Beginning January 03, 2003, the State Data Exchange Supplemental Security Income (SDX/SSI) match process will generate automatic CARES system updates to the unearned income question screen (AFUQ), unearned income screen (AFUI), and the unearned income detail screen (AFDU). This automated SSI income update – Phase II, will eliminate most DXSX discrepancy reports currently requiring action by eligibility workers. Phase II will also eliminate most errors that result from incorrect budgeting of SSI income.

NOTE ➤ A more detailed Operations Memo and training material describing this process will be distributed in December 2002.

PROCEDURE

Eligibility workers are currently required to manually subtract verified SSI-E expenses from SSI-E income prior to entering the income into CARES. This manual process must continue until January 03, 2003, however the verified expense amount must also be entered into CARES on screen AFDU prior to January 03, 2003.

WORKER REQUIRED ACTION

SSI-E Expenses

In preparation for the SSI auto-update, screens AFUI and AFDU will be enhanced to include fields for SSI-E expenses and verification. The following procedures will be used prior to 01/03/03:

- Reports will be sent to local agencies' CARES/Policy Coordinators identifying all SSI-E recipients currently known to CARES.
- Eligibility workers must subtract any SSI-E income that may currently be included with other "SI" unearned income on screens AFUI and AFDU.
- The SSI-E income must then be re-entered in CARES by creating an "SISE" income sequence.
- Verified SSI-E expenses must continue to be manually subtracted from the SSI-E income before the amount is entered as "SISE" income.
- SSI-E expenses must **only** be entered on the AFDU screen that identifies "SISE" as the type of unearned income.

Eligibility workers must enter the verified SSI-E expenses on screen AFDU prior to 01/03/03 to ensure correct budgeting of SSI-E income following the conversion to auto-update of the SSI income amounts.

The edit message "FYI - SSIE expense amount greater than SSIE payment amount" will appear when the expenses are greater than the SSI-E payment amount on screen AFDU. This is an informational message and CARES processing can continue by pressing the "enter" key.

NOTE ➤ The new SSI-E expenses and verification fields **will not** affect Food Stamp benefit calculations in CARES until the first time SFED/X is run on or after January 03, 2003.

Example: Amanda receives monthly Federal SSI payments of \$500, State SSI of \$83.77, and SSI-E of \$95.99 per month. She has verified SSI-E expenses of \$90.00 per month. Her eligibility worker has added the payments of \$500 + \$83.77 + \$95.99 and subtracted \$90.00 in order to enter "SI" income of \$589.76 to be budgeted in Amanda's benefit eligibility determination. To prepare for the SSI Auto-Update, Amanda's worker changes the "SI" amount to \$583.77, enters \$5.99 as "SISE" income and enters \$90.00 in the SSI-E expenses field with the appropriate verification code.

On January 03, 2003, CARES will auto-populate the "SI" income with the federal SSI amount of \$500, create an "SISS" income sequence and auto-populate the amount with the State SSI of \$83.77, and auto-populate "SISE" with the SSI-E income of \$95.99. The verified SSI-E expenses will then be subtracted by CARES to determine the total SSI income that will be budgeted in the benefit eligibility determination.

Example: Lynn receives monthly Federal SSI payments of \$500, State SSI of \$83.77, and SSI-E of \$95.99. She has verified SSI-E expenses of \$40.00 per month. Her eligibility worker has entered the Federal and State SSI amounts as “SI” income totaling \$583.77. The worker has also subtracted the verified SSI-E expenses from the SSI-E payment and entered \$55.99 as “SISE” income in CARES. To prepare for the auto-update, the worker is required to enter \$40.00 in the SSI-E expenses field on the existing AFDU screen identifying the “SISE” income. The “SISE” income amount on \$55.99 is not changed by the worker, but will be auto-updated on January 03 when the verified expenses will also be automatically subtracted from the gross SSI-E amount.

NOTE ➤ Existing SSI income entries on AFUI must be identified with an SSI income type code (all SSI income type codes begin with “SI”). If any SSI income is entered under another code, such as “OTFS” or “SS”, it may be counted twice during eligibility once the automated updates are implemented.

2003 COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT (COLA)

The 2003 SSI COLA will be in CARES production effective December 09, 2002 to affect January benefits. As always, cases with more than one sequence of “SI” income entered on screen AFUI will not go through the automatic COLA conversion update. These cases will be written to an exception report. Cases that do not have verified SSI-E expenses may have all SSI income (federal, state, and SSI-E) added together and entered as “SI” income on screen AFUI to ensure correct automatic COLA conversion update on December 07.

INCOME AVAILABILITY SWITCH

Effective 11/15/02 a field will be added to screen AFUI for workers to indicate if a source of unearned income is available to the recipient. The “Income Available” field will default to “Y”. There are some rare circumstances where unearned income may not be available to the recipient. After January 03, 2003, eligibility workers will have the opportunity to change this field to “N” and document why the income is not available. The availability switch will not affect benefit calculations until the SSI auto-update process goes into production in January, and SFED/X is run. Even if a worker changes the “Income Available” field to “N”, any entered income amount will still be used in the program eligibility determinations. If you have a case where unearned income has been verified as unavailable to a recipient, the field can be changed to “N” for the appropriate income type. Document on AFDU the reason the income is unavailable. After January 03, the first time SFED/X is run, the income will not be included in any program eligibility determinations.

Example: Jennifer’s 8 year old daughter Monica is living with Jennifer’s mother Grace for an indefinite period of time. Grace has applied for FS for herself and Monica. Monica is an SSI recipient, however Grace has indicated that the SSI payments have not been made available to Grace to meet Monica’s needs. The eligibility worker verifies that Monica’s federal and State SSI payments continue to be sent to Jennifer and documents that the SSI income is unavailable to Grace or Monica. In this case, the eligibility worker must:

1. Indicate that Monica is an SSI recipient on screen ANBR,
2. Budget “SI” as an income source on screen AFUI,

3. Enter "N" in the "Income Available" field on screen AFUI,
4. Enter "0" income for the "SI" source on screen AFDU, and
5. Document on the AFDU comments lines and/or on CMCC the circumstances that describe why the income is unavailable.

Effective 01/03/03, Monica's SSI income on screens AFUI and AFDU will be automatically updated to indicate the amounts of her federal and State SSI payments. However, since her eligibility worker has indicated that the income is unavailable, the amounts will not be used in the program eligibility determinations.

REMINDERS

Any individual who is eligible for or receiving SSI payments or SSI 1619(b) Medicaid (including a child) meets the disability criteria for FS. Check screen ANDI for these individuals to ensure that the disability questions and "incapable of employment" question (to exempt from FSET) have been coded correctly.

Food stamp groups that include elderly or disabled individuals are not subject to the gross income or shelter cap tests.

SSI recipients are also categorically eligible for FS, so any assets they own will be excluded in the asset test for FS.

CONTACTS

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Note: Email contacts are preferred. Thank you.